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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/764,523	01/27/2004	Kenji Nakashima	1341.1177	9957
21171	7590	06/09/2006	EXAMINER	
STAAS & HALSEY LLP SUITE 700 1201 NEW YORK AVENUE, N.W. WASHINGTON, DC 20005			ALLEN, WILLIAM J	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3625	

DATE MAILED: 06/09/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/764,523	NAKASHIMA, KENJI	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	William J. Allen	3625	

-- Th MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 January 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 27 January 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>1/27/04</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Priority

Acknowledgment is made of applicant's claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d). The certified copy has been filed in parent Application No. 10/764,523, filed on January 27, 2004.

Claim Objections

Claim 16 is objected to because of the following informalities: Claim 16 recites "requesting a processing for shipping a product to a user who uses the user terminal when the executing executed the product purchasing procedure" Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. **Claims 1-6, 9, 11-18, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Niki et al. (US 2002/0037257, herein referred to as Niki).**

Regarding claim 1, Niki teaches:

an identification information issuing unit that issues, upon receiving a group purchasing application request for a product from a user terminal, user identification information corresponding to the group purchasing application request (see at least: Fig. 1, abstract, 0042, 0056, 0070, 0144); and

a product purchasing execution unit that executes, upon receiving a purchasing procedure request for a product from the user terminal with the user identification information issued, a product purchasing procedure for a user who made the purchasing procedure request (see at least: Fig. 1 and 5, 0041-0049, 0053-0060),

and sets the user as an object user for the group purchasing processing corresponding to the user identification information (see at least: 0030, 0037, 0041-0042, 0135, Fig. 10).

Regarding claims 2-6, 9, 11-18, and 20 Niki teaches:

(2) *wherein the product purchasing execution unit executes, upon receiving a group purchasing procedure request for a different kind of product based on the group purchasing with the user identification information from the user terminal, the product purchasing procedure for a user who made the group purchasing procedure request (see at least: 0068, 0138-0140, Fig. 11).*

(3) *an identification information transmitting unit that transmits the user identification information issued from the identification information issuing unit to the user terminal, wherein the product purchasing procedure execution processor receives the product purchasing procedure request with the user identification information transmitted (see at least: Fig. 1 and 3, abstract, 0042, 0056, 0070).*

(4) wherein the identification information issuing unit receives a group purchasing application request indicating a group purchasing of a product for a predetermined number of persons from the user terminal (see at least: 0004, 0042-0043). The Examiner notes that the purchaser side specifies the members of the bulk purchase group when requesting a bulk purchase of products. The specification of members done so as part of the request constitutes a pre-determined number of participants.

(5) *a shipping processing request unit that makes a processing request for shipping a product to a user who uses the user terminal when the product purchasing execution unit executed the product purchasing procedure (see at least: 0040, 0058).*

(6) *a discount amount calculating unit that calculates, after the product purchasing execution unit completes execution of the product purchasing procedure for*

each user, a discount amount for a product to be paid back to the user corresponding to number of the object users for the group purchasing processing; and a discount amount output unit that outputs the discount amount calculated (see at least: 0110-0115, 0123-0128, Fig. 6 and 8).

(9) wherein the identification information issuing unit issues a uniform resource locator of last page of either of the processing of the group purchasing application request and the purchasing procedure request (see at least: 0034, 0066-0068, Fig. 11-13). The Examiner notes that a homepage provides access to the contents concerning a bulk purchase group, with each individual bulk purchasing page on the WWW server representing an individual page for that group purchase. Each individual web page has an assigned URL.

(11) an identification information storing unit that stores, upon the identification information issuing unit receiving a group purchasing application request for a product including at least a plural pieces of user identification information to identify a plurality of users, respectively, the user identification information of the users (see at least: 0056, 0072, Fig. 9); and

a message transmitting unit that transmits, upon the apparatus receiving an access from a user terminal of the users whose user identification information is stored in the identification information storing unit, a message to urge the users to carry out the group purchasing to the user terminal (see at least: 0043-0044, 0056, 0070); The Examiner notes that a Leader accesses the group purchasing system and creates a group purchasing request via a terminal. Subsequently, the each member of the group

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purchase is informed of an ID to access the group purchasing system, thereby urging the users to complete a purchase via the group purchasing system using the ID;

wherein the product purchasing execution unit sets, upon receiving a product purchasing procedure request in response to the message transmitted, users who made product purchasing procedure request as object users for the group purchasing processing corresponding to the user identification information (see at least: 0135, Fig. 10).

(12) an expiration date creating unit that creates an expiration date of the user identification information issued by the identification information issuing unit (see at least: 0014, 0050, 0061, 0096, 0107, 0127-0128);

wherein the product purchasing execution unit sets, upon receiving the product purchasing procedure request with the user identification information, a user who made the purchasing procedure request as the object user for the group purchasing processing corresponding to the user identification information, if the expiration date of the user identification information is valid (see at least: 0107-0108, 0135, Fig. 5, Fig. 10).

(13) a user information management unit that manages information on each user included in the product purchasing procedure request by associating the information with the group who made the group purchasing application (see at least: 0042-0043, 0056, 0070).

R garding claims 14-18 and 20, the claims 14-18 and 20 closely parallel claims 1, 3, 5, 6, and 9. Claims 14-18 and 20 are thereby rejected under the same rationale.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. **Claims 7 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niki in view of Tiley et al. (US 2001/0032443, herein referred to as Tiley).**

Regarding claim 7, Niki teaches all of the above and teaches calculating discounts/refund amounts for a bulk purchase group (see at least: 0110-0115, 0123-0128, Fig. 6 and 8). Niki, however, does not expressly teach wherein the discount is calculated as a *credit point*. Tiley teaches calculating various discounts and in store credits (i.e. *credit points*) to provide incentives to shoppers (see at least: 0043, 0049, 0136-0138). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to have modified the invention of Niki to have included discount amounts in the form of *credit points* as taught by Tiley in order to provide store owners/retailers a system that motivates purchasers to visit their stores (see at least: Tiley, 0049).

Regarding claim 8, Niki teaches all of the above and teaches calculating discounts/refund amounts for a bulk purchase group (see at least: 0110-0115, 0123-0128, Fig. 6 and 8). Niki, however, does not expressly teach where the discount amount is calculated *based on a destination area for shipping each product*. Tiley teaches providing incentives for retrieving purchases at specific locations. Purchasers and retailers are permitted to have a package delivered to a specific remote location (i.e. *destination area*) for package pick (see at least: 0058, 0074, 0147-0148). Each remote location/destination provides information about the types of incentives they will provide, with the administrator calculating relevant incentives, such as discounted/reduced shipping costs, according to weighing factors provided by the retailers (see at least: 0048, 0107). The uniquely calculated incentives are then provided for view and selection to the purchaser (see at least: 0063, Fig. 1). The Examiner notes that because each remote location, and thereby destination area for a product to be delivered and picked up, has uniquely calculated incentives, Tiley teaches where the discount amount is calculated *based on a destination area for shipping*. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to have modified the invention of Niki to have included discount amounts in the form of *credit points* as taught by Tiley in order to provide store owners/retailers a system that motivates purchasers to visit their stores (see at least: Tiley, 0049).

5. Claims 10 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niki in view of Yoshimine et al. (US 2002/0138827, herein referred to as Yoshimine).

Regarding claims 10 and 19, Tiley teaches all of the above as noted and further teaches *creating a website exclusive for a group carrying out the product purchasing procedure* (see at least: 0023, 0042-0044, 0145, Fig. 12 and 13). Each individual bulk purchasing site on the WWW server represents an individual site for that specific group purchase request. Though the contents of the homepage are open to the public, group purchase members/purchasers are identified in the registration of the group purchasing request and use an ID that enables the group members/purchasers to place an order. Tiley, however, does not teach *wherein the issuing includes issuing a uniform resource locator of the website created as the user identification information*. Yoshimine teaches *wherein the issuing includes issuing a uniform resource locator of the website created as the user identification information* by determining an appropriate URL corresponding to a user ID (see at least: 0112-0114, 0117, 0122). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to have modified the invention of Niki to have included *wherein the issuing includes issuing a uniform resource locator of the website created as the user identification information* as taught by Yoshimine in order to provide users with an unmistakable identifying URL through use of familiar indicia such as a most highly desired user ID (see at least: Yoshimine, 0072, 0112).


Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to William J. Allen whose telephone number is (571) 272-1443. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Rob Pond can be reached on (571) 272-6760. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

William J. Allen
Patent Examiner
June 5, 2006


Primary Examiner